

The Rocky Hill Town Council held a special meeting (public hearing) on Monday, April 27, 2015 in the Council Chambers of Town Hall. Mayor Henry Vassel called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance: Deputy Mayor Nadine Bell, Councilor Meg Casasanta, Councilor Guy Drapeau, Councilor Joe Kochanek, Councilor Tim Moriarty, Councilor Frank Szeps and Councilor Cathy Vargas. Also present: Town Manager Guy Scaife and Finance Director John Mehr.

Those absent: Councilor Bill MacDonald.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Councilor Moriarty asked Mayor Vassel if he could ask for a Moment of Silence for Jesse Harrison, who passed away and who used to be a member of the Town Council, as well as the Planning and Zoning Commission. Mayor Vassel asked for a Moment of Silence to be observed.

Presentation and Discussion -2015-2016 Proposed Budget

Town Manager Scaife thanked the public for attending this evening and he said that hopefully there was a much broader audience that was watching this live broadcast from home or that they will be watching it on a rebroadcast. He said he would be giving a brief update to the public and to the Town Council with regards to the proposed budget. He was going to focus on a few changes and then he told Mayor Vassel that he would turn this meeting back over to him for a public hearing to be held.

Town Manager Scaife gave a PowerPoint presentation. (Please see the attachment.) After the presentation, he said that the final decision by the Town Council with regards to the budget for the Town and for the Board of Education, as well as what the mill rate will ultimately be, will be made on May 18, 2015 or sooner. They have a couple of weeks to analyze revenue and spending trends, etc. They will continue getting updates from the State as to what they might be doing. He said they received some positive news this afternoon and there is some potential of some upside but it is unclear as to whether this will hold. The Governor's budget has been reviewed and a Subcommittee has made some recommendations. The Finance Committee for the State will come out with their recommendation this Friday. If the news that they got today about the increase holds then that will be great or this might offset other cuts that they don't know about. This will be monitored very closely.

Town Manager Scaife said he had been in dialogue with Superintendent Dr. Zito earlier today and they will have actual spending data, as well as revenue, early next week for April so he said they will be working over the next two weeks to see what this insight will give them as they continue to refine the number (budget). Town Manager Scaife is optimistic that they might be able to slightly trim the number. The Town Council will have hard data by at least May 12, 2015. The Bd of Ed has been very cooperative in providing their actual year-to-date and they made a projection that was based on March. The Bd of Ed, as well as the Town departments,

will do this same thing again towards the latter part of next week with one more month's data. There will be a number that will be much more refined in mid-May. They will also have better insight with regards to the State budget as to what may or may not happen with that. They are also continuing to look at their revenue growth and he emphasized that the somewhat vibrant development economy they are in is certainly very positive.

Mayor Vasel asked the Town Council if any of them had any questions for Town Manager Scaife with regards to the presentation. Councilor Szeps told Mayor Vasel that this is a public hearing so the public could address the Town Council and this is the only item on the agenda. Councilor Vargas and Councilor Moriarty said this is all that they could talk about.

Public Comment

Mayor Vasel asked if anyone from the public had any comments about the budget that was presented. Helen Perry, 14 Brimfield Way, R.H., asked what the original figure was before the reduction of \$510,000 (for the Bd of Ed's budget). Councilor Drapeau asked if the Town Council is supposed to answer questions because this is a public hearing so they were supposed to be hearing from the public. Mayor Vasel asked Town Manager Scaife if he had the numbers. Town Manager Scaife referred to the original number and said the mill rate would have been increased by an additional .4 mills. Helen Perry mentioned again about the reduction being \$510,000 and she asked what that figure is from. Deputy Mayor Bell said Helen Perry is asking what the original budget request was. Mayor Vasel said it was \$37,077,869.

Peter Arico, 28 Maxwell Drive, R.H., said the average person has no clue as to the effort and time that is put forth in the duties of the Elected Officials. He thanked the Elected Officials on behalf of the Rocky Hill voters and he told the Town Council this was for them too. He also thanked Town Manager Scaife for his efforts in bringing this budget to the point it is at this evening. Peter Arico said he had some suggestions for them to consider. He referred to how Town Manager Scaife has suggested that a referendum be included in November's ballot. Peter Arico said this would outline over \$6,000,000 in expenditures according to an article in *Rocky Hill Life*. He also mentioned that *Rocky Hill Life* had stated that this public hearing was going to start at 6:00 p.m. this evening. He referred to the old Town Hall building which now houses the RHPD. Major renovations were done to that to bring it to its current standard. A Sally Port was constructed since the conversion. This referendum will include HVAC repairs and/or replacement, a new jail and a new generator for the RHPD. He asked who oversees the expenditure and the actual construction when that or major renovation is done. He questioned if they are getting a "fair bang for our buck". He asked how often the jail room is used and he asked if they need to bring it up to code. The same would hold true for the generator and the HVAC system. Monies would also be spent to bring the radio dispatch system up-to-date at the RHPD so he asked them to please consider regionalizing the dispatch system as far as the people are concerned. They could combine their Dispatch Center with other Towns. This could begin with weekend and night shifts being combined and integrating the other Towns' systems with Rocky Hill's. This would probably show a considerable cost savings. He also mentioned how it is being recommended to have money spent to upgrade fire equipment and asked if the Town's CIP isn't designed so that equipment, as well as vehicles, are kept up-to-date. Rocky Hill has a rescue boat and he asked if Glastonbury, Wethersfield or Cromwell have rescue boats too. They

typically hear that the State Police dive teams are involved when they hear of a water crisis so he questioned if Rocky Hill's rescue boat is needed. The population for Rocky Hill is around 20,000. There are three ladder trucks, which probably cost up to \$1,500,000 each when these are fully equipped, and three firehouses. New Britain has one ladder truck and the population there is three times larger than Rocky Hill's. He said that Rocky Hill could at least sell one of their ladder trucks, maybe two, so that they could have some additional money in CIP for items that are being considered for the referendum.

Peter Arico asked them to also consider charging fees for outside events with regards to the utilizing of Rocky Hill's parks unless they are doing this already. He also told them to consider charging fees for dumping at the Transfer Station because he doesn't believe that they do that. He questioned if fees are charged when outside people use the schools' auditoriums or fields and he said if they do that then maybe that money can go into the budget to reduce the need for the expenditures. He also thinks they need to take a hard long look at the changes throughout the Town Manager's Office or the Town Clerk's Office and he also mentioned a charge system if they aren't doing that yet. He thanked them for their time.

Sandy Lanter, 2360 Main Street, R.H., said she was present this evening to speak on behalf of the Cora J. Belden Library. She feels that a library that is well stocked with Staff and with material speaks loudly to other Connecticut Towns about how Rocky Hill feels about its residents, as well as the fact that it has such a great asset. She had never heard about Rocky Hill when she had come to Connecticut over twenty years ago. The people she had worked with kept mentioning the library over and over again. She thinks the library makes Rocky Hill a nice place to live and it helps their real estate values.

Christa Mariner, 58 Farms Village Road, R.H., said she was present this evening to speak about the Zoning Regulations' update and the crafting of Low Impact Development Regulations, which are under CIP on Page 90 (in the 2015-2016 Proposed Annual Budget book) and in budget line 5329. She believes that Town Manager Scaife had said during his budget presentations to the Town Council and Finance Committee that the Town had received a quote of \$25,000 for Glenn Chalder from Planimetrics who is onboard to serve as this project's consultant. Christa Mariner is concerned that Town Manager Scaife's budget for this project might be too small. Christa Mariner said her understanding is that \$50,000 was budgeted for Glenn Chalder's consulting services in Berlin. She asked the Town Council to please consider increasing the budget amount to \$50,000 even though there is no guarantee that the amount would actually reach \$50,000 for the drafting of new Zoning Regulations but she is concerned that budgeting too low for this may not ultimately guarantee the consulting services of Glenn Chalder and Planimetrics. Public participation had been a necessary and major part of the process in Berlin when they drafted their new Zoning Regulations. She referred to the public hearings that Berlin had to discuss new Agricultural Zoning Regulations and how those drew over one hundred of their residents. She said if only Rocky Hill would get such an attendance at the Planning and Zoning Commission meetings. There is no deadline or time limit for the drafting of new Zoning Regulations, unlike the current update for the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). She believes that the Planning and Zoning Commission had spent over one year working on this process when the Zoning Regulations had been last updated in 2006. She mentioned it is imperative for Rocky Hill to retain Glenn Chalder's consulting service because he had been the consultant in 2006 for

the Zoning Regulations and he also was for the 2001 POCD, as well as for the current one. No other consultant knows Rocky Hill as well as Glenn Chalder does and no other one could have completed the current POCD prior to the deadline of July 31, 2015. Christa Mariner said Glenn Chalder also maintains an excellent relationship with the Planning and Zoning Commission members, the Staff at the Town Hall and has displayed respect for the public despite the budgetary constraints of the current update of the POCD. She thanked the Town Council for their consideration of this.

Mayor Vasel asked if anyone else from the public wished to speak and no one else did.

Adjournment

Councilor Vargas made a motion to adjourn the special meeting (public hearing). The motion was seconded by Councilor Szeps and adopted unanimously by those present.

As there was no further discussion, the special meeting (public hearing) was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth